



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/781,889	02/12/2001	Sadahiko Yamaoka	1232-4684	9633
27123	7590	11/07/2005	EXAMINER	
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P. 3 WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER NEW YORK, NY 10281-2101			POND, ROBERT M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

3625

DATE MAILED: 11/07/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

The Applicant amended independent claims 1, 6, and 11. All pending claims (1-15) were examined in this non-final office action.

Response to Arguments

Pertaining to Rejection under 35 USC 102 in previous office action

Applicant's arguments filed 31 August 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Barnes discloses organizations, large organizations with thousands of employees, different locations, and different remote facilities. Barnes discloses organizing employees into purchasing groups and limiting an employee or employee groups from accessing certain supplies. Barnes further discloses assigning one or more suppliers to a group wherein each supplier is permitted to provide an electronic catalog accessible by at least one employee group. Barnes is at least describing selected suppliers belonging to a group of suppliers whereby one or more employee groups can be assigned to access at least one supplier group or a plurality of supplier groups.

Though not relied upon it is notoriously old and well-known in the arts that groups of employees are known to be associated with a company's geographic locations and/or facilities. Though not relied upon it is notoriously old and well-known in the arts that large corporate organizations are organized into groups

and sub-groups by corporate function (e.g. corporate staff, sales & marketing, engineering, manufacturing, shipping, human resources) and that the purchasing needs of each group differ.

Pertaining to Rejection under 35 USC 103 in previous office action

Applicant's arguments filed 31 August 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant's arguments for claims 3, 8, and 13 rely on arguments presented for independent claims 1, 6, and 11. The Examiner respectfully disagree with the Applicant for the reasons stated above under rejection under 35 USC 102.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

- 1. Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-12, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Barnes et al. (Paper #5, US 5,970,475, hereinafter referred to as Barnes).**

Barnes teaches all the limitations of Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-12, 14, and 15. For example, Barnes discloses an online procurement system designed to support parts procurement (see at least Fig. 1 (10); col. 1, lines 5-17). Barnes further discloses:

Art Unit: 3625

- Parts database: multiple supplier databases (see at least Fig. 3 (16, 42, 44'); Fig. 4 (16); col. 8, line 60 through col. 27).
- First designating means for parts: designating parts for supplier catalog (see at least Fig. 3 (42); Fig. 14; col. 9, lines 51-59).
- Searching and display: (see at least Fig. 2 (26, 28, 30, 34, 42); col. 6, lines 33-65; col. 8, line 36-38).
- Pricing database: catalog pricing (see at least col. 4, line 15);
 - i. plurality of bases: large companies with thousands of employees using the purchasing system being located in a single location or different locations, and in different facilities remotely separated (see at least col. 7, line 48-55); employees being assigned to a group (see at least Fig. 19).
 - ii. supplier(s) belong(s) to a base: Inherent in Barnes are the structures necessary to permit one or more suppliers being assigned to a specific base. For example, Barnes discloses assigning suppliers to a supplier group and creating multiple suppliers groups wherein each supplier is permitted to provide an electronic catalog to the group, and further discloses assigning employees to a group wherein a employee or groups of employees are limited in accessing certain supplies (see at least Fig. 15 col. 23, lines 14-26). Fig. 16 illustrates in which suppliers employees can purchase can be specified, at 139c, and this option is, again,

accessed by selecting the "Supplier Management" option in FIG.

13. (see at least Fig. 13, Fig. 16, (139c).

- Second designating means for parts: designating parts to be ordered (see at least col. 9, lines 51-53; col. 18, lines 43-45).
- Display control means for displaying price: (see at least col. 4, lines 5-16).
- Price difference display control: displays pricing and discounts to purchasers; purchasing based on discounted prices negotiated with suppliers (please note examiner's interpretation: making purchases based on discounted pricing equates to cost-cutting) (see at least col. 4, lines 5-15).
- Database storing purchase record information: (see at least col. 8, lines 53-54).
- Database storing order status and price history of orders: all users can view status and history of orders and generate reports (please note examiner's interpretation: history contains price history) (see at least col.9, lines 49-50).
- Internet communications with web browser interface: (please note examiner's interpretation: Internet communication and web browser interface provide bulletin board functionality) (see at least col. 7, lines 11-13; 24-26; col. 9, lines 66-67).

Application/Control Number: 09/781,889
Art Unit: 3625

Page 6

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 3, 8, and 13 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barnes (Paper #5, US 5,970,475), in view of Business Wire (Paper #5, PTO-892, Item: U).**

Barnes teaches all the above as noted under the 102(b) rejection and teaches cost-cutting by displaying discounts and further teaches advantages of negotiated pricing, but do not disclose displaying control means for displaying prices higher or lower than a price. Business Wire teaches BuyerZone.com joining forces with Inc.com to provide multi-vendor catalog, quote services, and comparison shopping tools. Business Wire further teaches providing intelligent decision-making tools so users can conveniently compare and purchase products online and can request quotes from multiple suppliers using a few simple keystrokes (please note examiner's interpretation: receiving multiple quotes results in receiving multiple prices that will be the same or ranging from highest to lowest). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at time of the invention to modify the system of Barnes to display

Art Unit: 3625

product pricing higher or lower as taught by Business Wire, in order to facilitate comparison shopping, and thereby help the purchases select the lowest price.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

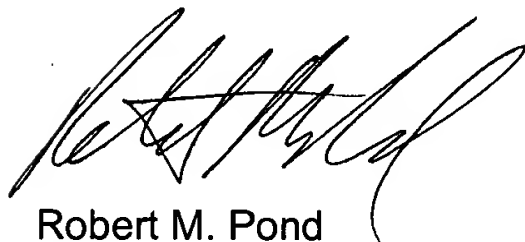
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert M. Pond whose telephone number is 571-272-6760. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ms. Wynn Coggins can be reached on 571-272-7159. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3625

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Robert M. Pond
Primary Examiner
November 3, 2005